

MINUTES HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
May 24, 2021
Remote Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Woodstock was called to order by Chairman Donovan Day at 7:03 PM on Monday, May 24, 2021 virtually, via Zoom webinar due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Pritzker's Emergency order.

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Jennifer Wegmann-Gabb, Tom Ellinghausen and Chair Donovan Day.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Marti Dejon and Erica Wilson.

STAFF PRESENT VIRTUALLY: City Planner Darrell Moore and City Manager's Office Assistant Betsy Cosgray.

OTHERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Larry Lough, The Woodstock Independent

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: A Roll call to accept the Minutes from the April 26, 2021 Commission meeting. Ayes: J. Wegmann-Gabb, and Chair D. Day. Nays: none. Abstentions: Tom Ellinghausen. Absentees: Marti Dejon and Erica Wilson. Minutes were accepted as presented. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** none.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

a. Certificate of Appropriateness – Metra Train Station

T. Ellinghausen moved to postpone the item to the next meeting when more commission members can be present. J. Wegmann-Gabb seconded. Roll call vote: Ayes: J. Wegmann-Gabb, T. Ellinghausen and Chair D. Day. Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: M. Dejon and E. Wilson. Motion to postpone the COA for the Metra Train Station passes.

b. Certificate of Appropriateness – Woodstock Warming Station

D. Moore provided background information on the current and past structures near and around the train station. He shared photos of a mockup of the approximately 300-square-foot Fox River Grove station upon which they are modeling the proposed Woodstock shelter. Responding to J. Wegmann-Gabb's question on whether Metra was keeping the same design, D. Moore stated it was a strong likelihood. J. Wegmann-Gabb stated she was hesitant to approve the COA without definite plans. D. Day stated he would like it if the design could mimic the architectural details of the current building with the corbels and window grilles. D. Moore stated he would share that suggestion. T. Ellinghausen asked if the abandoned tracks that are sitting on the northeast side of the current working tracks could be kept for historical sake. He also mentioned they may want to keep some of the current shelters for busy day overflow. D. Day agreed with this idea. D. Moore stated he will look into the abandoned tracks, but that keeping the current shelters is more a question of Metra's planning than historical preservation.

D. Day asked if the roof would match the existing train depot, which was followed up with J. Wegmann-Gabb's question asking if the brick could match as well. D. Moore stated he would also make that request.

After additional discussion, D. Moore stated he would inquire as to whether the cupola could be removed or painted a darker color.

J. Wegmann-Gabb moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the Woodstock Warming Station with a recommendation for the items listed: mimic windows and corbel designs, brick and roof material color match, and removal or paint the cupola a darker color. T. Ellinghausen seconded. Ayes: J. Wegmann-Gabb, T. Ellinghausen and Chair D. Day. Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: Marti Dejon and Erica Wilson. Motion for COA for the Woodstock Warming Station passes.

Reports and Updates:

a. Historic Preservation District Development Guideline

D. Moore shared the concept of using elevation as a benchmark of height in the historic district. He shared many slides with the idea that nothing could be higher than the roof of the Old Courthouse and the Opera House. He explained that using this concept, buildings on the east side of the Square could be taller than those on the west side, due to the slope of the land. D. Day stated that using this idea takes away some of the fear from looking at prospective taller developments. He also mentioned each development would be on a case-by-case basis for approval as well.

J. Wegmann-Gabb shared her concerns about how much the commission's input matters, since the City Council can overturn their decision anyway. D. Day stated that if the commission does their part and provides a recommendation to the City Council and it is overturned, then it is the responsibility of the residents to get involved and share their concerns.

T. Ellinghausen stated the spirit of the idea, the elevation benchmark, is on the right track, but was concerned that too many tall buildings will take away from the feeling and views of the Square. He stated he was concerned with a flat 991 feet elevation throughout the Square, as was presented. Discussion ensued regarding exceptions that could be offered. D. Day stated he would be more comfortable not putting an exact number to it and work with each development as it comes in, but understands that defeats the idea of creating guidelines.

D. Day said he is more concerned with the design and less on the size, using the Madison/Church development as an example.

J. Wegmann-Gabb reminded the commission they did not approve the look of that building. She also asked if the commission could be notified if a developer is appealing their recommendation, so they could possibly share their opinions with the City Council directly. D. Moore stated he would do that.

T. Ellinghausen stated that it is possibly the job of the commission to convince the City Council, if not the developer, what might be best for the historic district. D. Day stated that as a City we should want to come to the meetings as a united front. Discussion ensued on how they will get the City Council agendas for development issues in the future.

D. Moore suggested that if the commission comes up with clear, predictable and reasonable Rules and Standards for developers to adhere to, then when developers go in an opposite direction, the commission doesn't seem unreasonable to object.

T. Ellinghausen likes the idea of the elevation, but asked how complex could the elevation get. Then developers know what they can and can't build. J. Wegmann-Gabb stated it would be great for them to have this information prior to purchasing the property.

D. Day stated it might be a great idea to have a "get to know you" meeting with the Council so we can see their concept for the commission and what they want. He then asked D. Moore if he got the information he wanted from this discussion item.

D. Moore stated that he got the feeling the commission likes the idea of the elevations, but need to tweak the metric of how to use it as a benchmark.

b. North Benton Street

D. Moore shared the Dickson design for improvements to North Benton Street presented at the May 18, 2021 City Council meeting. He stated he is presenting this for information only, not needing any action. Discussion ensued about electric lines in the area and a possible mural that will need HPC approval in the future.

c. 220 N. Benton Street

D. Moore shared the current picture with the upgrades they have recently done on the building. He stated the building owner would like to upgrade the glass block on the southwest corner of the building and is asking the commission for suggestions on historically sensitive ideas for that area. Discussion ensued regarding options for this area. The commission came up with five suggestions: Continue the limestone base around the corner; take the corner back to the entrance like the 1900 photo; windows (like the north side of the Sheriff's House); brick with inset designs; or wood panels like those seen elsewhere on the Square.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Certificate of Appropriateness Woodstock Train Station
2. HPC Guidelines

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by T. Ellinghausen, second by J. Wegmann-Gabb, to adjourn this Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission. Ayes: J. Wegmann-Gabb, and Chair D. Day. Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: M. Dejon and E. Wilson. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Cosgray
Office Assistant